

REMARKS

In the Official Action of November 16, 2005, made final, claims 1, 2, 4-10, 13, 14, 37, 38, 40-46 and 49 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over the combination of Stuebe (U.S. Patent No. 5,659,538), Sanders (U.S. Patent No. 6,101,912) and Schleinz (U.S. Patent No. 5,597,642). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present invention is directed to a method for incorporating graphics into absorbent articles using either a print cylinder or a graphics applicator. The method involves the use of two primary inputs for controlling the printer or applicator: a line speed reference signal and a phase difference signal. The line speed reference signal measures the operating speed of the machinery (the line speed). The phase difference signal indicates the phase difference (relative angular position) of the printer or applicator and a target component of the machinery. The line speed reference signal sets the relative speed of the printer or applicator, while the phase difference signal is used to position the graphics.

The Examiner states that the Stuebe reference discloses a generic method for correlating multiple processes in the manufacture of absorbent articles. The method of Stuebe includes moving an article to a cutter, sensing a line speed target signal from a web line speed, rotating a processing cylinder at a predetermined speed based on the line speed reference signal, sensing a phase difference signal from a phase target machinery component, and setting an actual operating phase angle to position graphics on the article.

The Examiner concedes, however, that Stuebe does not disclose that the line speed reference signal is detected from a line speed target machinery component, as opposed to the web near the line speed machinery. Accordingly, the Examiner has cited the Sanders reference in order to correct this apparent deficiency of the Stuebe reference.

Applicant's position remains that the Sanders reference does not measure the line speed as required in the present claims. Note that applicant requires the line speed measurement in order to set the relative speed of the printer or applicator. See, for instance, pages 18 and 19 of the present specification, which also provides antecedent support for the present claim amendments.

In contrast to the present claims, the Sanders reference measures the length of articles on a moving line. Although, as indicated by the Examiner, the actual measurement is made by a lineshaft encoder, the encoder is used to provide position data regarding the location of the article along the line. See cols. 8 and 9 of Sanders. There is no disclosure in Sanders that the line **speed** is being measured, or that the measurement is made from the main drive of the manufacturing line. Furthermore, Sanders does not disclose the use of an encoder that measures the angular velocity of the main drive as a measure of the line speed. Accordingly, any modification of the Stuebe reference in view of the disclosure in Sanders, assuming that it is appropriate to combine these references, would still fail to teach or suggest the present invention as claimed herein.

Claims 2-3 and 38-39 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over the combination of Stuebe, Sanders and Schleinz, in view of the admitted prior art. This ground of rejection is also traversed.

Applicant submits that claims 2-3 and 38-39 are not obvious over the combination of Stuebe, Sanders and Schleinz for the reasons mentioned above in connection with the rejection of independent claims 1 and 37 in view of these references. The background information discussed in the specification does not disclose any process details relevant to claims 1 and 37, upon which these claims depend.

Claims 11, 12, 15, 47 and 48 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Stuebe, Sanders and Schleinz, further in view of Wilhelm (U.S. Patent No. 6,075,178). This ground of rejection is traversed.

The Stuebe, Sanders and Schleinz references have been discussed above in connection with independent claims 1 and 37. Wilhelm has apparently been cited as disclosing wetness indicators and decorative graphics. However, it is applicant's position that Wilhelm contains no disclosure that would remedy the shortcomings of the primary references as discussed in more detail above.

Claims 16-17 and 50-51 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Stuebe, Sanders and Schleinz, further in view of Harrison (U.S. Patent No. 5,003,676). This ground of rejection is also traversed.

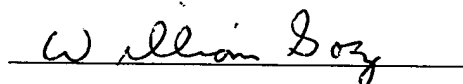
Harrison has been cited as disclosing that it is known to disengage a printer during the detection of a shutdown in the line, rotate the cylinder at an idle speed, and then

startup from an idle speed. Notwithstanding, Harrison also fails to remedy the deficiencies of the primary references, pointed out above, as applied to claims 16-17 and 50-51.

In view of the aforementioned facts and reasons, the present application is now believed to overcome the remaining rejections in this application, and to be in proper condition for allowance. Entry of the foregoing amendment at this time is deemed appropriate since no further review or search is required. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, is respectfully solicited. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below to discuss any matter pertaining to the status of this application.

Dated: February 16, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "William Gosz", is written over a horizontal line.

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